

4397. THE a 26  
*Christian Monitor:*

Containing an Earnest

EXHORTATION

TO AN

Holy Life;

With some DIRECTIONS  
in Order thereto.

WRITTEN

In a plain and easy Stile, for  
all sorts of People.

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HEB. 12. 14.

*Follow Peace with all Men, and  
Holiness, without which no  
Man shall see the Lord.*

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L O N D O N.

Printed for JOHN BEECHER,  
at the Bible and Crown, in  
Lombard-Street. 1747.

Imprimatur,  
C. Allen, R. P. D. Hen. Episc.  
a Sacris Domesticis.



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T H E

*Christian Monitor, &c.*

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C H A P. I.

*An Exhortation to an Holy Life,  
with Motives thereto.*

**I**T's very sad to consider, not only how few Nations there are in the World which profess Christianity, but also of those who do profess it, how few there are comparatively that live according to their Profession. Wherefore it well becoms all Christ's faithful Servants, especially the Ministers of his Gospel, to use their utmost Endeavours, by Life and Doctrine, by publick and private Exhortations,

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tions, by Preaching and Writing, and by all the Ways they are capable, to promote true Piety and Holiness among all sorts of Men, whether high or low, rich or poor, without which no Man can be happy, either in this World or that to come. And tho' I well know, Thanks be to God, that we abound with Multitudes of excellent Books written to this end; yet are not such short Instructions as these that follow, to be condemned as useless, since they will, it's like, be more generally dispersed, and that amongst the very meanest of the People, and may more easily be read and remembered by such as have neither Time to read large Books, nor Money to buy them. With such as these I have occasion often to meet, and for their sakes chiefly it is that I publish this little Paper, being encouraged thereto by some pious Persons, both of City and Country, who intend to give some of them away to poor People



People about them, and thought others might do the like. And may it please God to give a Blessing to such a mean Undertaking as this, and succeed it to the Good of Souls, I shall little regard the Censures of the Curious; remembering the Saying I have somewhere met with of a devout Writer to this purpose, That he was desirous his Book should be scattered abroad upon Pedlars Stalls, and thence come into the Hands of common People, for the increasing of Knowledge and Piety, rather than be solemnly laid up and buried in the Libraries of the Learned.

Wherefore, without any more Preface, I shall address myself to you, for whose sake I write these Lines, as a Persuasive to an Holy and Religious Life. Now in order thereto, let me beseech you to look back upon your Lives past, and call yourselves to an account, whether it has been your Care and Study to live in such a Godly man-

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ner as becomes those who are baptized in the Name of Christ, and after him are called Christians. Have you well considered what is the Meaning of this Name, and what Engagement you lie under to an Holy Life by taking it upon you in Baptism? And do you keep well in Mind your Baptismal Vow, wherein you renounced the Devil, the World, and the Flesh, and promised to be Christ's faithful Soldiers and Servants, and so to continue all the Days of your Life? Have you so far understood and considered these things, that you have made it your chief Business to walk accordingly? Do you watch carefully, and fight manfully against your spiritual Enemies? Do you live as those that believe the Gospel, sincerely endeavouring in all things to know the Will of God, and do it? Since you take Christ's Name in your Mouth, are you careful to depart from all Iniquity? In a Word, is this your  
**greatest**

greatest Study and Design, to please and glorify God, and to work out your own Salvation? If your Conscience can truly witness it of you, that it is indeed so, and that wherein at any Time you fall short or do amiss, you are heartily grieved for it, and do daily labour to amend and grow better: If it be thus with you, I say, then bless God for his Grace and Mercy, hold on and prosper, and fear not but God will be with you; he will own you as his Children, and for his Son Jesus's Sake, will both pardon your Sins, and assist you by his Grace, he will guide you by his Counsel, and at length receive you to Glory.

But pray deal faithfully with your own Souls, and tell me, has it not been quite otherwise with you? Have you not contented yourselves with a bare Name and Profession of Christianity, and in the mean time lead an ill Course of Life, directly contrary to your

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Profession? Have you not lived in wilful Ignorance of your Duty, or in gross Sins against your Knowledge? Do not the Temptations of the Devil, the Allurements of the World and the Flesh, many times prevail more with you, than the Commands of Almighty God, and the Voice of your own Conscience? Are you not wont to neglect God's Worship and Service, both in the Church and at Home? Yea, do you not profane his Holy Name by Swearing and Cursing? Are you not often guilty of Lying and Slandering, of Cozening and Cheating, if not of down-right Stealing? Do you not in your Anger use railing and reviling Language? Or, Do you not live in Envy and Malice, seeking for Revenge of those that have done you an Injury? Do you not allow yourselves in Drunkenness and Whoredom, or some other known and wilful Sin? To be short, Is there not something or other in this World  
that

that you love more than you do God himself, and his Son Jesus? Are you not much more concerned for your Bodies, than for your precious Souls? And do you not more earnestly seek for Food and Raiment, and the good Things of this Life, than after that Eternal Kingdom of Glory which God hath promised to his faithful Servants in the World to come?

If this indeed be your Case, I beseech you make a Stand, and consider well what you have been doing; what a sad and dangerous Condition you have brought yourselves into, and what the End of it will be if you hold on such Evil Courses. Humbly beg of God to make you duly sensible of your Sin and Danger, and to keep the Sense thereof so close to your Minds, that you may be brought not only to mourn for your Sins, but to loath and abhor them, and utterly to forsake the same, henceforth resolving, by the Grace of God,

wholly to give up yourselves to his Service, and to walk stedfastly in those holy and good Ways which he has appointed you. This is that to which I do most earnestly desire to persuade you. And that I may do my utmost to prevail with you, I shall lay before you some very weighty Arguments, which I request you seriously to ponder of as you read them, and God grant they may have their Effect upon the Heart of every Reader. *Amen.*

I. That you may be prevailed with to become God's faithful Servants, consider, first, *That this was the great End for which God made you, and keeps you alive, and gives you so many Mercies of all sorts.* You can tell, I hope, that God made you, and that he made you to serve him, by living according to his Commandments. These are some of those first things which Children learn; and it were well, if when they are grown up to be Men

Men and Women, they would use seriously to think of them, and practise accordingly. The wise God has made all Creatures for some good End or other, and he has fitted them all for those Ends and Purposes for which he made them. To Man therefore he has given the Use of Reason, chiefly to fit him for Religion, and to render him capable of knowing, loving and serving his great Creator and Benefactor: And it is Religion which makes the great Difference betwixt a Man and a Beast: For brute Creatures have no Knowledge of God, no Regard to him, but are wholly led by their Senses, and mind nothing else but what is before them here in this World. But the poorest Man on Earth, who has the Use of his Reason, is near akin to the very Angels themselves; his Nature is like theirs, and but a little below them, so that he may be much taken up in the same holy Works

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that they are employed in, even in loving, and praising, and adoring the great and good God. To this End he may study both the Works and the Word of God, which reveal him to us, and should continually put us in mind of him. And all the good things we enjoy, should still make us sensible of the Goodness of God from whom they come; and fill our Hearts with Love and Thankfulness, and our Mouths with Blessing and Praise. This is the most proper Use of our Reason, and this God most justly expects from us reasonable Creatures; and even this the poor Man may render without any Hindrance to his daily Labours; and may still keep such an awful Sense of God upon his Mind, as may restrain him from wilful Sin, and make him careful always to please his Maker. And so our Reason was given to bridle and govern our Appetites, our Lusts and Passions; that we should not be led away  
into



into Gluttony and Drunkenness, into Wantonness and Uncleaness, nor into Rage and Fury, like brute Beasts that have no Understanding; but should live soberly and chaffly, quietly and peaceably with all Men, doing them all the good we can. For such holy Purposes as these chiefly was our Reason bestowed on us, and therefore in this manner ought it to be employed. Certainly, since God hath made us of a Nature so much better than Birds or Beasts, he expects from us other Works and Services than he does from them. They know nothing of God that made them, nor have they any Knowledge of another Life after this, but when they die, there's an End of them. But to us hath God given Immortal Souls, of more Value than the whole World; and for this End hath he created us, that we might serve and honour him here in this Life, and so may live with him, and enjoy him

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him for ever in the World to come.

Now if this be the End of our Creation, ought we not to live up to it? Do we not see all other things answer the End for which they were made? The Sun gives Light by Day, and the Moon by Night: The Earth brings forth Corn and Grass, and the Trees bear Fruit: The Horse, the Cow, and the Sheep, with many other Creatures, afford us much Service and Benefit: And shall Man alone be useless and unfruitful, to live to no good Purpose? When they are all so ready to serve us, shall not we chearfully serve him that made us for his own Service? Surely we cannot think that the wise God sent us into the World only to eat and drink, to sleep and play, or to work hard for a poor Livelihood. If this were all, we had better have been made brute Creatures, or never have been made at all: Much less can  
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we think, that the Holy God made us on purpose to sin against him, to dishonour his Name, and provoke him to Anger. He did not give us Reason to make us crafty and cunning for the World, that we might know how to cozen and cheat our Neighbours. He did not give us Tongues to Swear and Curse with, or to talk foolishly and filthily ; let us not then use them to any such ill Purposes. Since God has given us precious Immortal Souls, let us not live like Beasts that perish, wallowing in the Mire of base sensual Lusts and Pleasures. By this means we become worse than Brutes themselves, for we debase our own Natures, we abuse our Reason to our own Shame and Hurt, and God's Displeasure. Thus we cross the End of our Creation, and are more stupid and ungrateful than the very Ox or Ass ; for they *know their Owner*, and do good Service to those that keep

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keep and feed them. *Isa. 1. 2, 3.*  
O let us not give God Cause to complain of us, as he there does of the Jews, that *he nourished and brought up Children, and they rebelled against him.* Think how grievous it is to you that have Children, after all your Care and Kindness, after all your Cost and Labour, to have them prove stubborn and disobedient, loose and idle Prodigals. O see then that you be not such towards your Heavenly Father, who made you and preserves you, and every Day renews his Mercies upon you. He keeps us alive, and makes our Lives comfortable. He gives and continues to us our Reason and Senses, our Health and Strength, Food and Raiment, and all the good Things we enjoy. He supplies

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See *Spiritual Counsel, or the Father's Advice to his Children.* The Sixteenth Edition. Price 6d.

plies our Wants, and helps us in all our Distresses. He gives us Light by Day, and Rest by Night. He enables us to follow our Callings, and gives a Blessing to our Labour, that we may provide for ourselves and Families. And does not this good God well deserve all the Love and Service which we can possibly render him? O how can we find in our Hearts wilfully to offend him, who thus delights in doing us Good! Foolish and unthankful Wretches we are, thus ill to requite the Lord for all his Loving Kindness. We could not deal so with any Friend or Neighbour on Earth, that had been always kind and loving to us. Are not Servants bound to work for them who maintain them, and pay them Wages? And ought not Children to obey their Parents who begot them, and brought them up? How much more then ought we to obey God our Father, who gave

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gave us Life at first, and still prolongs it from one Day to another, when he could in a Moment cut us off in our Sins, and throw us into Hell? But in much Mercy he spares us, and gives us space to repent, and is very unwilling to destroy us, and therefore waits long to be gracious to us. O then let his Patience and his Goodness at last have this happy Effect upon us; let it lead us to true Repentance, and ever hereafter engage us to Diligence and Constancy in his Service, *Rom. 2. 4. 2 Pet. 3. 9.*

II. To which purpose consider again, that *this was the End for which God sent his Son Jesus into the World*, even to seek and save us lost and miserable Sinners, to bring us to Repentance and Newness of Life, that so we might be restored to the Love and Favour of God, which we have lost by Sinning against him. Our first Parents, *Adam and Eve*, were created

created in a very holy and happy Estate, but they fell from it by sinning against God, and so came all Misery into the World; and then did our Heavenly Father take Pity on us, and sent his own Son out of his Bosom to be our Saviour and Redeemer, to reform us from our Sins, and so to deliver us from Misery. First, he will make us Holy, and then we shall be made Happy. For as Man lost his Happiness by disobeying God's Command, so he must recover it by becoming obedient to his Will in all things. To this End hath the Lord Jesus fully revealed God's Will to us, when we were in Ignorance and Darkness. He hath given us Holy Precepts for the Rule of our Life, and made most rich and precious Promises to persuade us to our Duty, and denounced dreadful Threatnings to affright us from Wickedness.

And when we had deserved the Wrath of God for our Sins, then  
did

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did Jesus Christ shed his most precious Blood to make Atonement for us, and to obtain our Pardon and Forgiveness. He died for our Offences, and rose again for our Justification, *Rom. 4. 25.* And in his Gospel he hath given full Assurance of God's Good-Will to Mankind, that he will be merciful to us, and pardon us, if we truly repent of our Sins, and forsake them. Thus hath Christ opened a Door of Hope for us, to encourage us to return to God: For if there had been no Hopes of Mercy, we should never have been drawn to Repentance, but even like the Devils themselves, should have remained full of Hatred and Malice against God, utterly despairing of Relief from him. But whilst the Death of Christ does so much engage and encourage us to forsake our Sins, it gives not the least Encouragement to our Continuance in them. Let us not think that Christ died for our  
our



our Sins, that we might have Liberty to live in them, and yet be saved at the Last: No; but he came to save us *from* our Sins, not *in* them. He makes us blessed by turning us from our Iniquities. He died to redeem us from a vain and evil Conversation, to purify our Hearts, and reform our Lives, and make us a peculiar People, zealous of good Works. *Mat.* 1. 21. *Acts* 3. 26. *Tit.* 2. 14. *1 Pet.* 1. 18.

The Death of Christ for us vile Sinners, shews the infinite Love of God, in finding out this Way for our Salvation: But then it shews also what an evil thing Sin is, and how hateful to God, since he would not pardon us without the Suffering of his own dear Son on our Account. And therefore if the Consideration of all this does not bring us to hate and abhor our Sins, and to love and serve our God and Saviour, we are never like to have any Benefit by Christ's Death.

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Death. All our Profession of loving him, and believing in him, will stand us in no stead without obeying him. True saving Faith in Christ is that *which works by Love*, both to God and our Neighbour. Christ accounts none to be his Friends but those that keep his Commandments, and to such only will he grant Pardon and Salvation, *Gal. 5. 6. John 15. 14. Heb. 5. 9. 1 John 3. 8.*

Since then the ever-blessed Jesus, the Son of God, came down from Heaven, became a Man, and died a most painful Death upon the Cross, that he might save us from Sin and Misery; shall we not accept of him as our Lord and Saviour, who comes to deliver us from the Power of the Devil, and our own Lusts, to make us the Children of God, and Heirs of Glory, which is a thousand times greater Deliverance than that of the *Israelites* from the *Egyptian* Bondage? Will you not be moved  
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by all that Christ hath done and suffered for you? Shall not his Love constrain you to love him, and to hate all Sin, which was the Cause of his Sufferings? Will you tread under Foot his most precious Blood, and even crucify him afresh, and again put him to open Shame? Thus in some sort do wicked Men use their Saviour, whilst they go on in their Sins, which are so displeasing to him. They that lie and cozen for a little Gain, what do they but in *Judas* sell away Christ for Money? They that live in Hatred and Malice, and do Mischief to their Neighbours, do in effect run the Spear into Christ's Side, and drive Nails into his Hands and Feet: And they that give themselves to Riot and Drunkenness, do even mingle Gall and Vinegar for him to drink. They do all that in them lies, by their sinful Pleasures, to put him again into Agonies and Pains.

But

But on the other Hand, it is a Delight to our Saviour to see us humbled for our Sins, and resolved to forsake them. He will readily and effectually intercede for us with our Heavenly Father, who is most willing to receive returning Prodigals. There is Joy in Heaven, when Sinners on Earth repent. Even this our Return to God by true Repentance, is the best Recompece we can make to our blessed Saviour for all his Pains and Sufferings. *When the Pleasure of the Lord prospers in his Hand by the Conversion of Sinners, he then sees the Travel of his Soul, and is satisfied.* Isa. 63. 10, 11. And shall we not afford this Satisfaction to our Redeemer, who hath undergone so much for our Sakes, and still, out of his tender Love to our Souls, follows us with such earnest Invitations to come to him for Life and Happiness? Could we deny him this most reasonable Request, if we saw him now in  
 Person

Person standing before us, beseeching us to turn and live? and this he now does by his Spirit and by his Ministry. But that leads me to the next.

III. Consider therefore, that *this also was the End for which the Holy Ghost is given, and all the Means of Grace afforded, even to sanctify our Hearts, and make us an Holy and Obedient People.* God knows the Weakness and Corruption of our Nature, and therefore in great Mercy he affords the Assistance of his Holy Spirit, to enlighten our Minds, and purify our Hearts? To renew and change our Natures, and guide us in the Ways of Holiness here, that so we may be fitted for Eternal Happiness with the most holy God in the Life to come, *John 3. 3, 5. Rom. 8. 9.* And for this End were the Holy Scriptures written by Men assisted and inspired by the Holy Ghost, to be a Light to our Feet, and a Lanthorn to our Path,

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Path, to direct us in the plain way to everlasting Life. 2 Tim. 3. 15, 16, 17. And the Holy Sacraments were appointed for the Increase of Grace to all that make a right use of them. And our blessed Saviour did at first send abroad his Apostles to preach the Gospel to all the World, and hath ever since continued a Succession of Ministers in his Church, whose standing Office is to administer the Word and Sacraments, to watch over the Souls of the People, to instruct and admonish them both in Publick and Private, and to use their utmost Diligence to bring them to the Knowledge and Love of God, and of his Son Jesus. And God is ever ready to accompany their Endeavours with his Blessing. Do you not often feel his good Spirit putting good Thoughts and Motions into your Mind, inclining you to that which is holy and good, checking and restraining you when you are running

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ning into Evil? But on the other Hand, it's the Evil Spirit, even the Devil himself, that tempts you to Sin, and would hinder you from your Duty. It's the Devil that tempts Men to Pride and Malice, and to all manner of Wickedness. For he being a proud, malicious, and most wicked Spirit, would have Men to be like himself, that so they may for ever be miserable with him. Will you not then resist the Devil, the great Enemy of your Souls, and be led and guided by God's good Spirit, and follow his Motions and the Directions of his Word, which lead to Happiness? O do not grieve this blessed Spirit, who alone can give us true Comfort; do not resist and quench his Motions, nor provoke him to depart from you, and leave you to your own Lusts, and to the Power of Satan, who seeks your Ruin.

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Moreover, as the Devil has his Instruments to draw Men to Wickedness, one ill Man tempting another; so Ministers are sent from God to draw you to Righteousness and Holiness. They are Ambassadors and Messengers of Christ, and do in his Name beseech you to be reconciled to God, who is most willing to be reconciled to you, if you will but cast away those wicked Works which provoke him to Anger, 2 Cor. 5. 20. O how will it rejoice the Hearts of your Ministers that truly love your Souls, to see the Success of their Labours, to have you come to them, enquiring what you must do to be saved, declaring your Repentance for your former evil Courses, and your Resolution henceforth to become new Creatures? Certainly we exhort you to nothing but what is highly reasonable, and for your own Benefit, whilst we persuade you to return to the Favour of God.



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God. Why then will you not hearken to us? If a Message of Mercy should be sent you from the King, when you were in Danger of Death for Rebellion, would you not most gladly and thankfully receive it? And will you not be as thankful and obedient to the King of Kings? and as wise to save your Souls, as to preserve your Bodies?

And besides his Word and Ministers, God also pleads with you by his Providence to bring you to Repentance. Sometimes he sends Afflictions to correct you for your Faults, to shew you the Evil of Sin, and draw you home to himself; and at other times he sends many Mercies, as I have told you, to soften your Hearts, to engage and allure you to his Service; and such good Use we ought to make of all God's Dealings with us.

IV. Consider further *what Engagement you lie under to an holy Life*

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*Life by your own Profession, Promises and Vows.* You profess and call yourselves Christians, the Disciples and Followers of Christ: Ought you not then to follow his Example, and obey his Commands, if you will make good that Name? You will think it a great Disgrace not to be taken for a Christian, but for a *Turk* or *Jew*. Beware then lest you bring this Disgrace upon yourselves by an unchristian Temper of Mind, and ill Course of Life. If you are false or cruel, covetous or lustful, like a *Turk* or *Jew*, it matters little what you call yourselves. He is not a Christian that's one outwardly, but he that has the same Mind and Spirit that was in Jesus Christ. God will not at the last Day judge of Men by their Names and Titles, but by their Hearts and Lives. Only it will go much worse with a Man that calls himself a Christian, and yet lives like a Heathen or Infidel.

And

And pray consider how by your Baptism you are solemnly listed under Christ's Banner, to fight against the Devil, the World, and the Flesh; and by the keeping this Vow, you shew yourselves, to be Christians indeed. But if you are led away by the Temptations of Satan, and do his Works, and are ensnared by the Vanities of the World, the Lusts and Pleasures of the Flesh, you do in effect renounce your Baptism.

Besides this, have you not renewed the same Vow at the Holy Communion, there openly professing your Belief in Christ crucified, and promising Obedience to him? If you have not received this Holy Sacrament, though you have long been at Years of Discretion, you then shew yourselves, by this Neglect, to be no obedient Disciples of Christ, since you do not obey his plain Command, *to do this in Remembrance of*

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him. Luke 22. 19. And indeed I fear that many careless People will not come to the Communion, because they think it would bind them to lead such a strict and holy Life as they have no mind to. But do they not cast off Jesus Christ from being their Master, who look upon his Commands as too strict and severe, and will not promise to obey him? Yea, do they not thereby even disown their Baptism, by which they were bound to this Obedience? So that the same Reason which keeps them from the Communion, it's like, would keep them from being Baptized, if it were yet to be done. And what sort of Christians are they that would reject Christian Baptism, because it engages them to an Holy Life?

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*See My Treatise of Sacramental Covenanting with Christ, shewing the Ungodly their Contempt of Christ, in their Contempt of the Sacramental Covenant.*

If you are not guilty of this Neglect, but do sometimes come to the Lord's Supper, to keep up the Remembrance of his Death and Sufferings; then pray consider, that by receiving this holy Sacrament, you do solemnly renew your Vows to be Christ's faithful Servants and Disciples, and to walk in sincere Obedience to all his holy Laws, as you hope for Salvation by his Death. Wherefore may I not well beseech you to use all due Care to live according to this your Promise and Engagement? What a Shame is it for a Man to be false to his Word, much more to his Oath? O do not then break that Oath which you have made to God himself, by taking his Holy Sacrament. And call to mind if you have not on a Sick-bed, or in some great Danger, made the same Promise and Vow: And has not God spared you, to see how you would perform the same? Take heed then of abusing

his Mercy, and breaking your Promise.

Moreover, I might shew how your professing to believe the Creed, engages you to live well, according to the holy Faith you profess, *which is a Doctrine according to Godliness.*

But lastly, the very Prayers you put up to God, lay the same Engagement on you, even to serve and please this God whom you Worship. To instance briefly in the Lord's Prayer; whilst we call God *Our Father*, &c. ought we not to love and honour him; to obey him, and submit to him as our heavenly Father? Whilst we pray that his *Name may be hallowed, his Kingdom come, and his Will done in Earth as it is in Heaven*, ought we not ourselves to honour his Name, and advance his Kingdom, by obeying his Laws, and by doing his Will constantly and chearfully as the Angels do in Heaven, to the utmost of our Power?

Praying

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Praying for *daily Bread*, teaches our Dependance upon God, and engages us to serve him by whom we are maintained. When we pray God to *forgive our Trespases as we forgive others*, this strictly binds us to forgive those that offend us, as ever we hope for Mercy from God. And when we pray *not to be led into Temptation, but delivered from Evil*, this should restrain us from running into Temptation, and make us careful to avoid all Sin, and the Occasions of it. To the same purpose I might also mention the Prayers of the Church, to which I hope you come frequently. Therein you begin with the Confession of your Sins, and ought you not to forsake as well as to confess them? And in the End of the Confession, you pray God, *for Christ's Sake, to grant that you may lead godly, righteous and sober Lives*. And almost in every Prayer you will find somewhat to this effect. Now I hope

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you are in good earnest in these your Prayers, else you do mock God and affront him, instead of worshipping him, and pleasing him. But if you do heartily desire these things which you pray for, then you will do your part for the Attainment of them, and will diligently endeavour to live in so holy and good a manner, as you pray that you may do. And if you thus add Diligence to your Prayers, God's Grace will never be wanting for your Assistance.

V. Consider also how just and equal all God's Commandments are, such that our own Reason cannot but approve of them, as being most agreeable to us as we are reasonable Creatures. To instance in the chief of them. Is it not most just and fit that we should love God above all, who is the best and most perfect of all Beings, and from whom we receive all our good things? Ought we



we not to pray to him who alone can hear and help us, and to give Thanks and praise to him, who is the Father of Mercies? Is it not most reasonable that Children should obey their Parents, and Subjects their Rulers? And that all Men should live in Peace and Love with one another, and speak truly, and deal honestly, as they would be dealt with? Is it not most fit and decent for a Man to eat and drink moderately, so as makes most fit for his Health? To be modest and chaste in all his Conversation? Will not every Man's own Reason acknowledge the Equity and Fitness of these and the like Precepts? And for some that do seem more severe, there may be given very good Reasons for them also. So that plainly, all God's Commands are the wise and wholesome Counsels of a most tender Father, who forbids his Children nothing but what's hurtful, and requires nothing of them

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them but what makes for their own Good, even to *deal justly, to love Mercy, and to walk humbly with their God*, Mic. 6. 8. *Christ's Yoke is easy, and his Burden light*, Mat. 11. 30. God's Service is perfect Freedom, as we daily stile it in our Prayers: And his *Commandments are not grievous*, 1 John 5. 3. Shall not we then be so dutiful to our Heavenly Father, yea, so wise for our own Good, as to obey these most reasonable and gracious Laws which he has given us? So just and equal they are, that we cannot break them without offering a kind of Violence to ourselves, and going contrary to the Reason of our Mind. *They are Light to the Eyes, and Joy to the Heart, sweeter to a good Man than Honey, and the Honey-Comb*, as the Psalmist often speaks. As suitable are God's Commands to our Natures, and as useful and healthful to our Souls, as the most wholesome Food to our Bodies.

And

And for a Man to direct his whole Carriage and Behaviour according to the Laws of God, is as much his Wisdom, as it is to go clothed in decent Apparel, and to eat and drink what is good for his Nourishment. But on the other hand, for one to run naked about the Streets, to fill his Mouth with Mire and Dirt, to cut and mangle his own Flesh, is not a greater Sign of Folly and Madness, than for a Man to live according to his own Lusts, rather than after the Laws of God, which are so agreeable to our Reason, and do so plainly conduce to our own truest Interest and Advantage, both in this Life, and that to come ; as will appear by what follows.

VI. Consider therefore in the next place, that it is a most certain Truth, *That the leading of an holy and good Life, is in all respects very greatly for a Man's own Benefit and Comfort, even in this present*

*present World. Godliness is profitable for all things:* It makes for the Quiet of our Minds, the Health of our Bodies, the Increase of our Estates, and procures us much Credit and Esteem, much Love and Good-Will among our Neighbours. Yea, it commonly brings along with it all manner of Blessings, and makes the Enjoyment of them more sweet and pleasant, and keeps off a great deal of Trouble which wicked Men bring upon themselves, and affords much Support and Ease under those Afflictions which the Providence of God may lay upon us. Infomuch that no Man, of what Rank and Condition soever he be, can lead a truly comfortable Life, except he lead an holy and good Life. All this is frequently taught in Scripture, and may be easily manifested by clear Reason: Or, if that be not sufficient, it is also most plainly to be discerned by daily Experience,

rience, that they who truly fear God, have much more Peace and Comfort in this World, than wicked and loose Livers, that make no Conscience of their Ways.

If I should make the Comparison only betwixt a sober Man and a Drunkard, which do you think has the better of it in this Life? How often do the great Drinkers not only waste their Estates, but destroy their Health, weaken their Brains, and shorten their Lives? How often do they fall into Quarrels, get Wounds and Bruises, and sometimes Death itself, either by fighting, or by one sad Accident or other? Sometimes the very Children in the Streets run after them, shouting, and making Sport with them; and if you follow them to their own Homes, what Disturbance and Mischief do they make there? What Swearing and Cursing, what Brawling and Scolding, what

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what Quarelling and Fighting is there? What Outcries and Lamentations do Wife and Children make? Who now, perhaps, are glad to get away for fear of their Lives, as before they sat starving for want of that Money which these ill Husbands waste in the Alehouse. (A Sin and Shame it is to those that entertain them.) And after they have lived a while at this wild and wicked rate, the next News commonly is, that either for Debt, or for Disorder, they are laid up in Prison, and sometimes by those very People in whose Houses they drink away all they got. And now they are forced to live upon Bread and Water, and linger out a miserable hungry Life in a cold stinking Dungeon, till either the Charity of Friends, or Death itself, release them thence. (And by the way, is this such a pleasant Life, that it's worth being damned for in Hell Torments to all Eternity? Of which afterwards.) That

That also I might tell of the sad Effects of Whoredom, which is commonly followed with Poverty and Disgrace, and many times with a filthy loathsome Disease, which makes Men rot above Ground. And thus angry, proud, malicious and revengeful People, are a continual Torment to themselves, and to all about them, and seldom have any Peace or Quiet, either with their Neighbours, or in their own Families. The like may be shewn of all other Vices, which are still wont to bring their own Punishment along with them, to say nothing of what is or ought to be inflicted by the Magistrate. Especially such wicked People as Thieves or Murderers, Traitors and Rebels, do seldom escape the Hands of publick Justice. *But who will hurt Men if they be Followers of that which is good? Or what hurt does a Man bring upon himself by living soberly and chastly, by fearing God and honouring the*

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the King? What Mischief does a Man get by minding his own Business, and living quietly and peaceably among his Neighbours? Nay, how happily may we see even some of the meanest sort of People live, that are diligent in their Callings, and sober and temperate, and careful to please God, and keep a good Conscience in all their Ways? Very seldom it is that they are pinched with much Want; or if they should fall into a low Condition, yet all good People that know them are ready to pity and relieve them; and will often trust them with Money or Goods till they are able to pay. And every Body is willing to employ an honest industrious Man, so that he shall seldom want Work or Trading. But idle riotous People, that follow Whoring and Drinking, Gaming, and Cheating and Stealing, that neglect God's Service, and profane the Lord's Day, being often



often in the Alehouse when they should be at Church ; these are the People, if you observe it, that do commonly fall into the basest Beggary and Misery ; and Men do but a little pity them, because they brought it all on themselves. O how happy might all sorts of People be, in a very great measure, even at present, if they would but become truly righteous and good ! It is their own Sin and Folly, their Lusts and Passions, that occasion most of those Troubles and Miseries which they meet with ; though I know they use to cry out of their hard Fortune, and to lay the blame upon others, and sometimes to murmur against God himself. But they consider not how they provoke God to Anger daily by their heinous Sins, and therefore may justly feel his heavy Judgments for the same, besides all the Mischief which naturally follows upon Wickedness. And  
this

this makes their Condition to be sad indeed, that they are always liable to the Wrath of God, and may justly expect his Vengeance to fall upon them, and to strip them of all their Comforts, and throw them into the worst Calamities.

But on the contrary, herein above all lies the good Man's Security and Comfort, that he enjoys the Blessings and Favour of Almighty God, and therefore is sure to want nothing that's truly good for him. So it is promised, *Psal. 84. 11, 12. Mat. 6. 33. They that first seek the Kingdom of God, and the Righteousness of it, shall have all that is needful added to them.* So that a poor Man can take no surer Course to provide for himself and Family, than to become truly religious; though he may not have great things in the World, yet he shall have Food convenient. And then, which is better than all, he shall have

have God's Blessing with what he enjoys, and this will afford him more true Content and Comfort in that little he has, than a wicked Man can find in all his great Treasure. Godliness with Contentment is the greatest Gain, *Psal.* 37. 16. *1 Tim.* 6. 6. A Poor Man that has only *Jacob's* With, Food to eat, and Raiment to put on, if also he has *Jacob's* Piety, and takes the Lord for his God, and lives in his Fear and Service, and enjoys the Sense of his Favour, how blessed is the State of this Man? How cheerfully may he live at all times, notwithstanding his Poverty? What though his Dwelling be mean, his Fare somewhat hard and coarse, and his Clothing very plain; yet whilst he loves God sincerely, and worships him duly and devoutly, he may even turn his Cottage into a Palace, yea, a Temple; and the blessed God will visit him with his Presence, will  
accept

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Accept of his Services, and refresh him with the Light of his Countenance. And upon this Knowledge and Enjoyment of God it is, that the true Comfort of a Man's Life depends, whatever his outward Condition be. It is this alone which gives inward Peace and Satisfaction to his Mind, and sweetens all his Mercies; and above all things, bears up his Heart under those Afflictions he meets with. For the best of Men must expect their Share of outward Troubles in the World, such as Sickness and Pain, Loss of Friends and Estate, with the like; these are the Calamities common to all. But here the good Man has clearly the Advantage, since he looks upon all that befalls him as coming from the Hand of a most wise and gracious God, who knows what is best for him, and to whose Will he freely resigns himself and all his Affairs, saying, with his blessed Master, *Not my Will, O God, but thine*

thing be done. Yea, he receives Afflictions as sent in kindness to correct him for his Faults, to exercise and increase his Graces, and so to prepare him for Glory. And here's the greatest Benefit of Religion, that it teaches a Man whither to go for Relief and Comfort in his Straits and Difficulties, even to this great and good God, who is most able and ready to help his People in all times of Trouble. This we still read in Scripture was the Course of holy Men, and they found it was not in vain. And to this Day will God's faithful Servants find the good Effects of thus devoutly applying themselves to God by Prayer, *for his Eyes are ever upon the Righteous, and his Ear open to their Cry.* He takes Pity on them, comforts and supports them. He will lay no more upon them than he enables them to bear; and in his good time he supplies their Wants, and delivers them from  
C their

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their Afflictions; yea, he turns them into Blessings, and makes all work together for their Good, as he has promised to them that love him. Rom. 8. 28. O what Happiness is it to be acquainted with God, to have a due Sense of his Providence, so as to live on it and improve it! *Job 22. 3.*

But how sad is the Condition of a wicked Man, who has no such Knowledge of God, no Love to him, nor any Expectations of Help and Relief from him: Even in his greatest Prosperity he's a very miserable Man, whilst he lives without God in the World: But he feels himself to be so indeed, when he falls into any great Calamity, and knows not which way to turn himself for Help and Comfort. For as Wickedness still brings Men into Misery, (as I have before shewn) so there it leaves them in the most wretched forlorn Condition. And the ill Temper of their Minds adds Weight

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Weight and Load to their Calamities, and grievously increases the Smart of them. The Sense of their own Guilt sometimes torments their Consciences, and fills them with Fear and Horror: Sometimes they rage and fret against those that help on their Sufferings, and sometimes they even blaspheme God himself, and murmur against his Providence. Whilst the good Man, with *Job*, blesses God in all his Afflictions, these are ready to follow the Counsel of his Wife, even to curse God and die. For being full of Anguish and Despair, they are at their Wits end, and weary of their very Lives, as we read of *Cain* and *Judas*, and such like, both in Scripture and other History. For my part, I do verily think; that next to the Devils and those in Hell, there are no Creatures in the World more miserable than wicked ungodly People; and what we see what the common F

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Sin is here on Earth, we may easily be convinced that it leads to Hell and Damnation hereafter. And all this do Men madly and wilfully run into by their own evil Doings, even as a Man that thrusts his Hands into the Fire is like to feel Pain and Smart. *By forsaking God, they forsake their own Mercies, and sinning against him, they wrong their own Souls, yea, their Bodies too, and all their Concerns.* Thus you see that an Holy Life is most profitable for us, even in this present World, preventing much Evil, and bringing all manner of Good along with it. Or if a Man should fall into such hard Times, as to suffer merely for Religion and a good Conscience, he shall then commonly find such wonderful Comfort and Satisfaction of Mind, that he will triumph and rejoice in the midst of his Sufferings: As we know the Apostles and primitive Christians did, and that especially in hope of the glorious



rious Rewards laid up for good Men in the Heavens. But that brings me to the last Consideration I shall mention.

Lastly, namely, *That an holy Life, through the rich Mercy of God, will render us perfectly and eternally blessed in the World to come; whereas a wicked Course of Life leads to eternal Misery and Torment.* According as we live in this World, so must we fare in the next: For this Life is a State of Trial, in order to Eternity. Even at Death a good Man has Ground of much Comfort, having the Testimony of a good Conscience, and the Sense of God's Love, so that with St. Stephen, he may commit his Soul into the Hands of the Lord Jesus, who is ready to receive him. But how sad is it with a wicked Man, when, besides all the Pains of the Body, his Mind is tormented with the Remembrance of his Sins, and with the Fear of God's Wrath?

But the great Difference will be made at the Day of Judgment, when the *Sheep shall be set at Christ's Right-hand, and the Goats on the Left* ; as you have it described, *Mat. 25. 31, &c.* To those on the Right-hand, that is, the Pious and Good, will be pronounced that joyful Sentence, *Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the Foundation of the World.* And then shall they enter into that most glorious Kingdom, where neither Sin nor Sorrow shall ever disturb them more ; where they shall never feel nor fear any manner of Evil or Pain, either of Soul or Body ; but shall be admitted into the immediate Presence of God, where there is all Fulness of Joy for evermore. They shall have such a clear Knowledge of the ever-blessed God, and such a lively Sense of his infinite Perfection, as will fill them with Admiration, Love and Praise, and they shall feel the Love of  
God

God and their Saviour so fully shed  
abroad upon them, as shall raise  
their Hearts to the very utmost  
Heights of Joy and Thankfulness,  
and their Mouths shall be filled  
with Hallelujahs and Songs of  
Praise; and in this most delight-  
ful Employment shall they join  
with all the blessed Company of  
Heaven for ever and ever. That's  
the Perfection of all, that the Joys  
of Heaven shall never have an  
End. It is both a most *exceeding*  
*and eternal Weight of Glory* that's  
promised, 2 Cor. 4. 17, 18. *For*  
*ever shall we remain with the Lord,*  
1 Thess. 4. 17. The eternal God  
will be the Portion of his People,  
and their Joy in him shall never  
be lessened or abated through all  
Eternity. They shall be always  
blessing and praising him, always  
satisfied and ravished with the be-  
holding of his Glories, and the  
Enjoyment of his Love; always  
delighting with the most pleasant  
and agreeable Society of Angels

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and Saints; and never more shall dear Friends and Companions be separated from each other; when once they are met in Heaven, Death hath no more Power over them; they are become in some measure even like to Christ himself, and there shall see him as he is in all his Glory. *Phil. 3. 21. John 3. 2.*

But what it is thus to be made like to Christ, to see God and enjoy him, we are not able fully to express or conceive whilst we are here in the Body: To compare the Glories of Heaven to all the Riches and Honours of Courts and Palaces here below, were greatly to lessen and disparage them. So great are those heavenly Glories and Joys, that they can never be clearly known till they are enjoyed; as a blind Man can never tell what Light is, till his Eyes are open to discern it. It's enough for us that we have full Assurance from the Promises of the Gospel, that such

a State of unspeakable Happiness there is provided for good Men in the Life to come. And as the Lord Jesus is gone before to prepare it for them, so now by his Holy Spirit he prepares them for that blessed Place, by working in them that Grace which fits them for Glory, and is the very first Fruits and Beginnings of it in their Souls. True Holiness is the most certain Pledge of Eternal Happiness, and makes us meet for it. *Eph. 1. 13, 14. Col. 1. 12.*

Since then such a Glory there is, so infinitely great, so sure and certain, shall we not all be persuaded to seek after it, by walking in those holy ways that lead thereto? Surely we shall, if we have any Belief of God's Word, any Regard to our own Interest. Must our Souls live for ever in another World, and shall we not use our utmost Care and Diligence to make them happy for ever there?

Are they not our own Souls, and do they not then deserve our Love and Care? *If we be wise and good is it not for ourselves,* for our own Happiness? And is there any other way to make ourselves happy, but by gaining the Love of God and eternal Life? Do we not see that all worldly Comforts are short and uncertain? They wither in our Hands, and perish in the using. Our Neighbours and Acquaintance are daily dying round about us; many of our dearest Friends and Relations are already gone before us, and we ourselves are swiftly following after. We are just upon the Borders of Eternity; liable to a thousand Diseases and Mischances that may soon stop our Breath, and then we are gone. Since then we cannot make sure of this Life and the Enjoyments of it, O let us seek to make sure of Eternal Glory; which we may do by God's Assistance, even the poorest Man on Earth, if he will become

become sincerely pious and good. For God is no Respector of Persons. Christ died for poor Men as well as rich; and they that have no Inheritance on Earth, may be Heirs of the Heavenly Kingdom, if they be rich in Faith and Love to God. *Jam. 2. 5.* And methinks they that have so much Trouble and Sorrow in this Life, should be moved to seek after Riches and Glory in the Life to come. There the poorest *Lazarus* shall have a thousand times more Pleasure and Joy, than any of the proud *Dives* or rich Gluttons and Epicures have now in their delicious Fare and gorgeous Apparel. Nay, the very Hopes of this Glory may fill the good Man's Mind with so much Joy, that he will even forget his Poverty, and not count his Afflictions worthy to be compared with the Happiness he hopes for; nor would he change Estates with the greatest Prince upon Earth, who is a Stranger to these Hopes.

Thus it was with the Holy Apostles and their Followers. 2 Cor. 6. 10. 1 Pet. 1. 6, 7, 8.

Thus have I briefly told you somewhat of the Happiness of the Godly in the World to come: But on the other hand, consider what will be the Portion of the Wicked, who despise the Mercies of God, and the Offers and Promises of the Gospel: These will at last fall under his heavy Wrath and Vengeance, and there must remain for ever in the most intolerable Torment of Soul and Body, set out by the most dreadful Things, such as Fire and Brimstone, and a never-dying Worm that perpetually gnaws and stings their Hearts. They are cast into outer Darkness, where there is weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of Teeth, not the least Glimmering of Hope or Comfort to all Eternity. Mat. 25. 30, 41, 46. Mark 9. 43. to the end. 2 Thes. 1. 7, 8, 9. These are the Goats, that being set on the  
the



the left Hand, must hear that doleful Sentence, *Depart from me, ye Cursed, into everlasting Fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels.*

An heavy Doom, and yet most just. For they departed from God, and neglected his Service here on Earth, and therefore now they must depart from his Presence, in which their corrupt Minds can take no Delight. They preferred the Tavern and Alehouse before the House of God, and took more Pleasure in feasting and drinking, in roaring and revelling amongst their wicked Companions, than in worshipping of God in the Communion of Saints : They loved not Prayers and Praises in the Assemblies of his People, nor had any mind to come to the Lord's Table, though often invited there-to ; and therefore must they now be shut out from such holy Company, and from such high and Heavenly Employments, for which they are altogether unfit. They  
were

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were many of them greatly given to Cursing, and now it is come upon them; that *Curse of God* which they in their Rage often wished to their Neighbours, is now fallen upon themselves. Nay, did not many of these profane Wretches even call for this Curse upon their own Heads, in that Hellish Language of *God damn me?* And what wonder if their Petition be now granted, and they sentenced to that Damnation which they thus called for? By the *Devil* they were led and guided, and by his wicked Instruments and their own brutish Lusts; and therefore now they must have the *Devil and his Angels*, and damned Sinners like themselves, to be their Companions in Torment, who are so far from pitying or comforting each other, that rather they curse one another now in their Misery, who before tempted one another to Sin. O sad Meeting of the Drunkards, the Whoremongers and the Harlots there

here together in those scorching Flames! Where in vain they cry out for a Drop of Water to cool their Tongue; it must not be granted; their good Things are all past and gone, and the Remembrance of all their Riot and Lewdness serves but to increase their Torment. And now also they may remember how God did again and again call upon them, and they would not hear; neither therefore will he now hear their Cries, when Pain and Anguish is come upon them. *Prov. 1. 24*, to the end. And though they may cry out against their Companions, and accuse the Devil, and in their Rage blaspheme God himself, yet will their Consciences fly with the greatest Fury upon themselves, who in spite of all the Warnings that were given them, did by their own wilful and impenitent Continuance in Sin, plunge themselves into this Misery, from whence they must never be released. O dreadful.

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ful Words! *Everlasting Fire! Eternal Torment!* How does the Thought of this sink and break their Hearts, and fills them with deepest Horror and Despair? *Who can dwell with everlasting Burnings? Who can?* And yet the damned Sinner *must*, though in the most raging and impatient manner. After they have lain Thousands and Millions of Years in that Place of Torment, yet is there not a Moment less to come, there is a whole Eternity still behind. The Worm *never* dies, the Flame is *never* quenched. Nor is God to be accused of Severity in all this, since it was the Sinner's own doing, the Fruit of their own Choice; for they knew that Sin would sink them into Hell, and yet they would venture upon it. And indeed it sinks them thither as naturally as a Stone falls to the Ground. Even here on Earth, the proud and covetous, the malicious and revengeful, the profane and sensual,

do

do kindle somewhat of Hell in their own Souls; and whilst they carry along with them the same wicked Temper of Mind, it must still needs make them most wretched and miserable in another World, as long as ever their Souls live, and these Vices stick to them, that is, to all Eternity. Let not him that carries Fire in his Bosom accuse God's Providence for making the Fire hot, when he feels it burn him; but let him blame his own Folly and Wilfulness: And so must self-condemned Sinners be forced to do.

And now tell me, I beseech you, is there not all the Reason in the World that you should speedily repent you of your Sins, and cast them from you with Loathing and Detestation, and henceforward set upon a Course of serious *Holiness*, that so you may escape all this *Misery* threatened to the Wicked, and may partake of that Glory which is promised to the Pious and Good?

Good? Does not a thousand Pound  
a Year deserve the Labour of one  
Day? And will not all the Joys of  
Heaven, that shall last for ever and  
ever, abundantly reward our Dili-  
gence in God's Service for this  
short Life-time? And are not the  
Eternal Torments of Hell enough  
to restrain Men from a loose and  
sinful Life, though it were never  
so profitable or pleasant here for a  
little while? But you have before  
heard it fully proved, that even at  
present an holy Life is in all re-  
spects most for our Benefit or Com-  
fort. So that without doubt, a  
good Man finds more Sweetness  
and Satisfaction in the way to Hea-  
ven, than Sinners do in the way  
to Hell. Our gracious God ap-  
points us an easy and honourable  
Service, and gives glorious Re-  
wards; but the Devil is a most  
cruel Master, and sets his Slaves to  
the vilest Drudgery, and afterwards  
pays them very sad Wages. *Rom.*  
6. 21, 22, 23. Whether then  
will

will you be Christ's Freemen, or  
the Devil's Bond-slaves? Whether  
will you walk in the good ways of  
God, that bring Peace and Com-  
fort here on Earth, and eternal  
Glory in Heaven; or in the crook-  
ed Paths of Sin, which now bring  
Sorrow, and Shame and Pain, and  
hereafter will plunge you into eter-  
nal Misery and Torment in Hell?  
Thus are Life and Death, Happi-  
ness and Misery set before you,  
what Choice then will you make?  
One would think there was no  
great Difficulty in this case, to a  
Man that has the Use of his Rea-  
son, if he will at all make use of it  
in the Affairs of his Soul. A little  
Thinking serves turn to convince  
Men, that there is no reason why  
they should chuse Poverty and Re-  
proach, Pain and Imprisonment,  
(if they can honestly avoid them)  
rather than Riches and Honour,  
Ease and Liberty. But I am sure  
there is a thousand times less Rea-  
son for a Man to disobey God,  
and

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and damn his Soul for ever, rather than to please and serve him, and so make sure of eternal Salvation. Wherefore let me again beseech you to take the matter into Consideration, and think seriously what is most reasonable, and most for your own Interest, and then chuse accordingly. And I pray God direct your Hearts to make so wise a Choice, that you may never have cause to repent of it, either in this World, or that to come.  
*Amen.*

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C H A P.



C H A P. II.

*A brief Description of an Holy Life  
with some short Directions in  
order thereto.*

**I**F you now demand of me, wherein consists this Holiness of Life, to which I have been thus long and earnestly exhorting you; that I hope you may in some measure understand by reflecting on what I said at the Beginning, and by attending to what I have intimated all along in my Discourse: Yet for your Assistance, I shall somewhat more plainly represent to you, though but very briefly; as no other can be expected in this little Paper.

In the general then, (as I have before expressed it) I am only persuading you to live as becomes true Christians, according to your Baptismal Vow, in keeping of which  
consists

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consists your Christianity. Now by your Baptism you are engaged to believe in, and obey, God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. You must sincerely and heartily own God the Father as your Maker and Preserver, the Son of God as your Redeemer, and the Holy Ghost as your Sanctifier, Guide and Comforter. And accordingly must you behave yourselves both in Heart and Life; and therefore you must renounce the Devil, the World and the Flesh, which would draw you off from God, and must stedfully believe the Articles of your Christian Faith, and carefully keep God's holy Will and Commandments all the Days of your Life. Your Faith is required in order to Obedience; for if you do not believe Christ's Gospel, you are not like to obey it. In these two things then consists the Religion of a Christian, to which he is engaged by his Baptism, viz. in believing what Jesus Christ

Christ hath revealed, and in doing what he hath commanded. In short, he is a good Christian who does firmly believe his Creed, and carefully keep the Commandments.

The Doctrines which we are to believe, are indeed more largely and fully delivered in the Holy Scriptures, which were written by Men inspired by the Holy Ghost, and accordingly ought to be received as the Word of God, and to be diligently read, and stedfastly believed. But the chief Articles of the Christian Faith are briefly summed up in that which we call the Apostles Creed, *I believe in God the Father, &c.* This I hope you are well acquainted with, it being so short and plain, and daily repeated in the Church Service; and therefore I shall not set it down at large. And this also I hope you do believe to be most true. You would take it ill if I should question your Belief of the Creed, without

without which you are not to be reckoned as Christians. But let me advise you to consider seriously and frequently of these great Truths contained in the Creed, that you may more clearly understand them, and be more affected with them. And pray see that your Belief of them be very firm and deep-rooted in your Soul, that so the Fruit of your Faith may appear in the Holiness of your Life. Without this, the bare knowing of the Creed, and repeating it ever so often, will stand us in no stead. For, as I told you, Obedience is the end of Faith. And all the Articles of our Belief, do most plainly tend to make us holy and good, if we will but carefully attend to them, and consider well of them. To shew it in a few Words: *If we believe that God the Father Almighty made us and all the World*, then are we bound to love and honour him, to worship and obey him as our Maker and Preserver, who is Al-  
mighty

mighty in Power, infinite in Wisdom, Goodness, and all manner of Perfections. If we believe that *Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and the Redeemer of Mankind, who died for us, and rose again, and ascended into Heaven, and will thence come to judge the Quick and the Dead, and will grant to all penitent and obedient Believers, the Forgiveness of their Sins, and Everlasting Life,* but will sentence the Wicked to everlasting Misery; our Belief of this must lead us to Repentance and Amendment of Life, and to an humble Dependance on the Mercies of God, and the Merits of Christ for Pardon and Salvation. And if we believe, *that it is the Office of the Holy Ghost to sanctify us, and all the elect People of God,* then ought we to pray to God for his Holy Spirit; and we must comply with his good Motions, and submit to his working upon our Souls, that he may sanctify us and make us holy, that so we may be

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living

living Members of Christ's *Holy Catholic Church*. And in this Church are we bound to continue, that in the *Communion of Saints*, we may enjoy the Benefit of the Word, Sacraments and Prayer, by which means the Holy Ghost works Grace in us, and increases the same, till it be perfected in *Eternal Glory*, to which good Men shall be advanced both in Soul and Body at the Resurrection, as their Souls made Entrance upon it presently after their Death.

Thus you see how a right Belief leads a Man to Holiness of Life. And therefore in holy Scripture do we find so much mention made of Faith, or of believing in God and in Christ. This in many Places is highly extolled, and most strictly required of us, as the very Sum of our Duty; in so much that we are often said to be justified or pardoned on account of our Faith, and to be saved by Faith, and all this chiefly, as I suppose, because true Faith

Faith produces Obedience, and makes a Man become an humble and sincere Disciple of Jesus Christ, and so makes us fit for the Mercies of God, in and through our blessed Saviour. But when Faith does not bring forth the Fruit of Holiness and good Works, it's of no Value with God, nor will stand us in any stead, as you may see at large in the second Chapter of St. James to name no other Places. Wherefore you know we are engaged by our Baptism, not only to believe all the Articles of the Christian Faith, but also to keep God's Commandments, which I am to speak of next.

Now these Commandments are also plainly contained in the Holy Scriptures; and therefore there is still more Reason why you should diligently read and study the same, that you may know the Will of God and do it. And all that is to be done by us, I reckon is contained in the Ten Commandments,

as they are explained to us and urged upon us, both by the *Prophets* in the *Old Testament*, and by our *Saviour* and his *Apostles* in the *New*; especially in our *Saviour's* Sermon on the Mount, in the 5th, 6th, and 7th Chapters of *St. Matthew*. And therefore often read over these three Chapters. There you will find what manner of Persons the Disciples of Jesus ought to be, even like their Master, of an humble lowly Spirit, meek and gentle, pure and peaceable, merciful, patient, and the like. Such as these he pronounces blessed in the beginning of that heavenly Sermon, and these alone are they whom he will make most blessed with himself for ever. But if you will have the Sum of your Duty to God and your Neighbour as required by the Ten Commandments briefly represented, take it in the very Words of the Church Catechism.

*My Duty towards God is to believe in him; to fear him; to love him*



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him with all my Heart, with all my Mind, with all my Soul, and with all my Strength; to worship him; to give him Thanks; to put my whole Trust in him; to call upon him; to honour his holy Name and his Word; and to serve him truly all the Days of my Life.

My Duty towards my Neighbour is to love him as myself, and to do to all Men as I would they should do to me. To love, honour, and succour my Father and Mother. To honour and obey the King, and all that are put in Authority under him. To submit myself to all my Governors, Teachers, Spiritual Pastors and Masters. To order myself lowly and reverently to all my Betters. To hurt no body by Word or Deed. To be true and just in all my Dealings. To bear no Malice nor Hatred in my Heart. To keep my Hands from picking and stealing, my Tongue from evil speaking, lying, and slandering. To keep my Body in Temperance, Sobriety and Chastity. Not to covet

*and desire other Mens Goods, but to learn and labour truly to get my own Living, and to do my Duty in that State of Life into which it shall please God to call me.*

Here you have your Duty in a little room, which you may easily keep in Memory; but especially beg of God to write his Laws in your Heart, that you may freely and chearfully obey them in your Life and Conversation. And for your further Assistance, I shall a little enlarge upon the chief of these Duties, especially the Love of God and your Neighbour, and so conclude with some short and general Directions for the guiding of your Steps more readily and constantly in the Ways of Holiness all the Days of your Life.

To love God with all our Heart and Soul, is the first and great Commandment, as our Saviour himself teacheth us, *Mat. 22. 37, 38.* This makes us more easily to obey all the rest of his Commands.

For

For if we truly love God, we shall be very fearful to offend him, and very careful to please him in all our ways. And then do we truly love God with all our Heart, when we love him more than all other things in the World, more than Riches, Pleasures, Honour, Friends, or any other Enjoyments, yea, more than our very Lives; so that we will part with all, rather than lose the Favour of God, in which we account our Happiness chiefly to consist. This I take to be the very Essence of Religion, and it is that without which our Saviour tells us, we cannot be his Disciples. *Mat. 10. 37, 38.* But when once we are got to this blessed Temper, we shall find it no very hard matter to deny ourselves, and take up our Cross and follow our Lord and Master, both in well doing and in patient suffering.

Wherefore let us earnestly beg of God, by his holy Spirit, to work this Love in our Hearts. And

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to our Prayers let us add our own diligent Endeavours; and especially, let us be much in thinking of all the Goodness and Loving-kindness of God, manifested to us and to all the World. Let us consider what he has done for us already, both for Soul and Body, and what he has promised to do in the Life to come. And never let our Hearts be at rest, till they are entirely fixed upon the ever-blessed God as our chiefest Good, and only satisfying Portion. And let us earnestly seek his Favour thro' our Lord Jesus, the Mediator, who came into the World on purpose to bring us into a state of Friendship with God, that we might love him, and be loved of him, and live with him for ever in Love and Joy. But always remember, that Obedience to God is the only sure Evidence of true loving Love. He that loves God, will hate and abhor Sin and Wickedness. Let the Son pretend  
what

what Love and Honour he will to his Father, he does not truly love him, except he use all due Care to please him.

And if you do thus sincerely love God as your Father, then you may always comfortably trust in him, and depend upon him, which is another great Duty, and brings great Peace and Quiet to our Minds, *Isa.* 26. 3, 4. Whilst you live in Obedience to God's Commands, you have a sure Interest in his Promises, and may safely rely upon his good Providence for the Performance of them. Wherefore, whatever your Wants, your Dangers, or Sufferings are, do not distrust the Providence of God, but wait patiently, and do your own Duty, and be assured, God in his good time will succour and relieve you; he will direct, comfort and strengthen you. Let all the Experience you have hitherto had of his Loving-kindness, engage you to trust in him as long

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as you live. And take great care that you never murmur nor repine against God under any Affliction whatever, when you meet with the heaviest Crosses and Disappointments, or lose your dearest Relations and Friends, say with holy *Job*, *The Lord gives, and the Lord takes away, blessed be the Name of the Lord.* Beseech God to teach you that excellent Lesson of Contentment, in all Estates. *Phil. 4. 11, 12, 13.* Though you may be low and poor in this World, yet consider, you have always cause to be thankful, but never any reason to complain. God knows what Condition is best for us, and let us leave it to him to chuse what we shall have. We that deserve nothing but Wrath and Misery, ought to acknowledge the great Goodness of God, that we are on this side Hell. *It is of the Lord's Mercies that we are not utterly consumed,* and that we do enjoy any Measure of Comfort.

Think

Think how poor the Lord Jesus was for our Sakes, who had not where to lay his Head, and was ministered to by the Substance of others; and in the same mean Condition did the Holy Apostle live. Your low Condition frees you from a great many Snares and Temptations, and from a great many Cares and Sorrows that rich People meet with. If you but truly love God, and have a Treasure in Heaven, you are very rich, though you have neither Gold nor Silver. Fear not, but God will give you and yours Food and Raiment, and having that, let us be content and thankful. Yea, let us put the very worst, that we should starve to Death for want of Bread, (which not one of a thousand does in times of Peace and Plenty) yet if our Souls be fit for Heaven, and carried thither, we shall have no Cause to complain of the Manner of our Death. I have been a little larger upon this

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for the Sake of poor People, who are apt to be discontented, and to murmur at their Condition; though alas, they commonly bring themselves into it, or make it much worse by their own careless and loose Lives, as was before mentioned.

And yet before I proceed to the Duty you owe to your Neighbour, let me in a few Words direct you, as to the Worship of God in Prayers and Praises. This is a Duty most frequently enjoined in Scripture, and practised by all good Men, and the very Light of Nature may direct us to it. We have daily need of God's Mercy, and do daily taste of it, and therefore we are taught to *pray continually and in every Thing to give Thanks.* To God alone may we offer up our Prayers and Praises in the Name of Jesus Christ, as he himself teacheth us. *Matt. 4. 10. John 16. 23.* We must not pray to Angels or Saints, nor  
make



make use of them as our Mediators, for this is the peculiar Office of Christ who died for us, and is now interceeding at the right Hand of God. *1 Tim. 2. 5. Heb. 7. 25.* Wherefore we mean sinful Creatures, must always come to God in the Name of Christ, and for his Sake alone, hope for the Favour of God, the Pardon of our Sins, the Acceptance of our Persons and Services, and the Salvation of our Souls.

And our Saviour teacheth us to worship God in a pure and spiritual Manner, with our Hearts and Souls; because he is a Spirit, and searches the Hearts of Men. *John 4. 24.* Wherefore by no Means may we make any Image or Picture of God, nor may we give religious Worship to an Image, which is directly contrary to the second Commandment. Neither may we frame in our Minds any bodily Shape or Likeness of God when we pray to him, but must conceive

ceive of him as a most pure and glorious Spirit, most powerful, and wise, and good, who fills the whole World with his Presence, and is always near to us, tho' not to be seen with bodily Eyes; and hears our Prayers, and knows our Wants, and is both able and willing to help us.

Our Saviour hath commanded us to pray in private when we are alone. *Mat. 6. 6.* And there he taught his Disciples how to pray, and hath given us that most excellent Form which we call the Lord's Prayer, *Our Father which art in Heaven, &c.* which, by the way, may assure us, that Forms of Prayer are very lawful, and the Lord's Prayer may both serve as a Pattern to direct us in all our Prayers, and also is itself most fit to be used and joined to our other Prayers. But it is not proper to use the Belief and the Ten Commandments for Prayers, as the manner is of poor ignorant People; though

though we ought often to think of them and rehearse them, for the quickening of our Faith, and the guiding of our Lives.

Upon all Occasions, in all our Troubles and Distresses, let us be much in Prayer to God, and still seek to him for Mercy and Comfort, who is always nigh to them that call upon him in Truth and Sincerity. Would the poor Man seek as earnestly to God for Relief, as he does to his rich Neighbour, he would find it the surest Course to have his Wants supplied. And let us also frequently be lifting up our Hearts to God in Thanksgiving and Praise, for all his

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his Mercies and Favours which he bestows upon us. Thus may even the poorest Man have his Mind often employed, when he is at work in his Shop, or in the Field, or when he is walking in the Way, or sailing on the Seas, which would not hinder, but further his Labours, and make them more easy and pleasant. But be sure to set some time apart every Day for solemn Prayer.

Very fit it is to begin the Day with Prayer to God, as soon as we rise out of Bed ; blessing his Name for our Preservation and quiet Rest, begging his gracious Presence with us all the Day, that we may be kept from all Evil, especially from Sin, the worst of all. And at the Evening let this be our last Work before we lie down to sleep, humbly to commit ourselves to God by Prayer. *Psal. 92. 1, 2.*

Exceeding useful is it for those who have Families, to join together Morning and Evening in Prayer

Prayer to God, and in reading some part of his holy Word, for which purpose there are many good Books of Devotion: And though they have none of them, yet they may use such of the Prayers of the Church as are proper for their purpose, which are to be found in the Morning and Evening Service, and in other Places.

Before you set down to Meat, beg God's Blessing upon it, and afterwards return Thanks for it.

But besides our Devotions in the Family or Closet, our great Duty is to worship God in the publick Assemblies of his People, which by no means we ought to forsake. *Heb. 10. 25.* Suffer not yourselves therefore by any Preterces whatever to be drawn away, either by Papists or Sectaries, from the publick Worship of God, as it is now by Law established in the Church of *England*. But see that you duly resort to your Parish-Churches, and that not only on Holy-Days,

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but on the Week Days, when you have Opportunity and Leisure. More especially see that you constantly frequent the Church on the Lord's Day, if not hindered by Sickness, or some other very great and urgent Cause. Let not that Excuse keep you from Church, which would not keep you from the Market. Bring as many of your Family along with you as can possibly be spared. Come to the very beginning of the Service, and stay quietly to the end of it, not running away before the Blessing, as many careless People rudely do, as if they were glad to get away as from a Prison. Behave yourselves with all due Reverence, both of Body and Mind, considering the Majesty of that God in whose Presence you stand, before whom the very Angels veil their Faces. Always kneel at your Prayers, if there be Convenience, or stand at least. *Psaln* 95. 6. Above all, look well to the Temper of your Soul,

Soul, and keep an awful Sense of the great God to whom you are praying, and mind well what is said as you go along with the Prayers, and offer up your Desires to God: otherwise though you may speak much, you do not pray at all. Avoid all vain and wandering Thoughts, as much as possible. When you join in the Confession of Sins, think of your own particular Faults, and be deeply humbled for them: And be unfeignedly thankful for all God's Mercies, whilst you are praising his Name; and earnestly long after that Grace you pray for. Attend with Care and Reverence to God's Word, when it's read from the Desk, and also to the preaching and explaining it from the Pulpit, that you may be both diligent Hearers and faithful Doers of the Word. Neglect not the Church in the Afternoon, though you should live where there is no Sermon. Catechising may be as useful

useful to you, and this ought to be in all Places. And besides that you will hear the Holy Scriptures read, and have the Benefit of Publick Prayers.

When you come from Church, spend not the Remainder of the Day in Sports and Idleness, much less in Drinking and Gaming, as too many do: But if you have a Family, let some time be spent with them in praying, in reading God's Word, and some good Book; and let Children and Servants be instructed in their Catechism. Examine them about what they have heard, that so it may make them more attentive; and do you meditate on the same, that it may sink into your Heart. Works of Mercy and Necessity may be done on the Lord's Day; but by no means allow yourselves in any needless Labour, not in travelling upon the Road, or wandering about to make idle Visits. God allows us six Days in the Week for our own Employ-



Employments, let us devote the Lord's Day to his Service readily and chearfully.

When the Sacrament of Baptism is administered, do you attend to it. Remember your own Engagement by having received it in your Infancy, and resolve to live answerable thereto. Join in Prayer for God's Blessing on the Children then received into the Church. And when you bring your own Children to be baptized, see that you do most sincerely give them up to God, and devote them to his Service, with firm Resolution to bring them up in his Fear, if God spare your Lives and theirs, and earnestly pray for his Grace to be given into their Souls. And those to whom you stand as Sureties, you ought to do your utmost towards their good Education in the Knowledge of God and Religion, according to the Charge given you, especially if the Parents die, or prove negligent. And pray  
beware.

beware of a very wicked Practice which is common in some places, that after a Child is baptized, the Neighbours that are invited spend the rest of the Day in Riot and Drunkenness, forgetting that even now they renounced the Lusts of the Flesh; those who stood at the Font, and all the rest, are under the same Obligation.

Whenever you are invited by your Minister to the Holy Communion, do not willingly neglect the Invitation; but come with a thankful Heart, to keep up the Remembrance of Christ's Love in dying for Sinners, according to his express Command. *Luke 22. 19.* Take care to prepare yourselves, by true Repentance for all your former Sins, and stedfast purposes, by God's Grace, thoroughly to forsake the same. See that you be in perfect Charity with all Men, freely forgiving those who have offended you, and offering Satisfaction to those whom you have  
offended.

offended. If after this they will not be reconciled, that's not your Fault, but theirs, and therefore may not keep you from the Sacrament. Stay not away out of a pretence that you want time to prepare yourself, for a constant holy Life is the best Preparation. If you are fit for Prayers, you are fit for the Communion. Do not think that the Communion is only for rich People; the Souls of the Poor are as precious as the Rich, and as much concerned in Christ's Death; and they have as much cause to remember it, and seek after the Benefits of it. If you have not Money to offer at the Collection, see that you offer up yourselves to God, and that will be of more Value. Complain not that you want Clothes, and therefore you absent, both from the Church and Communion; but see that you come in the Wedding Garment required in the Gospel, with humble, penitent, thankful Hearts.

Hearts, and then you will be welcome Guests at Christ's Table. For your Direction, if you have no Books on this Subject, yet read seriously the Office for the Communion in the Common-Prayer, and you may find very great Assistance from it. It's very fit also to consult with your Minister, especially the first time you receive. Assure yourselves, it's a very heinous Sin, to live one Year after another in the Neglect of this weighty Duty, and argues a very great Contempt of our Saviour's Authority, and of his infinite Love and Kindness.

Before I leave speaking of your Duty to God, let me beseech you carefully to abstain from that common heinous Sin of Swearing; a most senseless piece of Wickedness, that brings neither Pleasure nor Profit along with it. When you are called before the Magistrate in weighty Cases, you may lawfully swear, *Heb. 6. 16.* but take great  
Care

Care to swear the Truth, and nothing but the Truth; for otherwise you call the true God to witness a Lye, and do even call for his Vengeance upon yourselves.

In your ordinary Conversation avoid all manner of Swearing, either by the sacred Name of God, or by any Creature. *Mat. 5. 34. James 5. 12.* Use not such Expressions, *As you hope to be saved, as you hope for Mercy,* with other the like, which are great Oaths, though frequently used upon every slight occasion. Do not so much as rashly and carelessly mention the holy Name of God, or Christ, but let your inward Reverence be manifested in your outward Expressions.

And to this I may fitly join an earnest Caution against the Sin of Cursing, in which the Name of God is often dishonoured. When Men wish that God's Curse may light upon others, sometimes their very Children and nearest Rela-

E tions,

tions, sometimes on their Neighbours, and sometimes on their Cattle. Some profane Wretches wish Damnation to those they quarrel with, yea, even to themselves. And how common is it to hear Men in their Wrath wish the Pox or Plague, or Hanging to their Neighbours, or bidding the Devil take them? Indeed they themselves seem to be possessed by him, whilst they vent this Language of Hell, and do take the ready way to bring all manner of Curses, both on their own Soul and Body, *Psalms* 109. 17, 18. This wicked Custom proceeds both from the want of the true Fear of God in Mens Hearts, and also from want of Kindness and Charity to one another; of which I am next to speak in a few Words.

Next to the loving of God above all, the loving of our Neighbours as ourselves, is the great Duty of a Christian, as our Saviour teaches in that same Place,  
*Mat.*



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Exhortation, that you would seriously and stedfastly resolve to cast away every Sin, and most entirely devote yourselves to the leading such a godly, righteous, and sober Life, as you are bound to by your Christian Baptism. If you are in Dispute with yourselves whether you should resolve upon it, pray look over the Arguments before laid down, and ponder them in your Mind; and then certainly you cannot but own, that I persuade you to nothing but what is very just and reasonable, and every way for your greatest Good: And if you are convinced of this, then proceed forthwith to this pious Resolution, without trifling or delaying: The sooner you do it, the safer it is, and the better for you. Do not go on in Sin at present, on a Pretence that you'll repent hereafter, when you are older, or when you come to be sick and to die. Do not put off the great Business of Life to the  
End

End of your Days, when you are not sure of Time or Strength, or of God's Assistance, or Acceptance of you. Do not plead the Example of the Thief upon the Cross; for his Case was nothing like yours, that have long enjoy'd the Offers of Grace and Mercy. If now from this present Time you will heartily and sincerely return to God, you have no reason to despair of his Mercies, how many and great soever your Sins have been: But if you still persist in Sin, presuming upon God's Mercy hereafter, you have just Cause to fear, that this bold Presumption, and horrid Abuse of God's Grace, may end in your Eternal Ruin and Damnation.

But if you are willing now speedily to enter upon this Resolution and Purpose, then let me in a few Words farther direct you by what means you may render it firm and lasting, and may be best enabled to perform the same.

I. And first, I would advise you to take the next Opportunity to confirm this holy Resolution at the Table of the Lord. There solemnly renew your Baptismal Vow, dedicate and give up yourself to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; renouncing the Devil, the World and the Flesh, and all those wicked ways they would draw you to, more especially those Sins which you have been formerly most guilty of. Henceforth let the Lord Jesus that bought you with his Blood, be taken for your only Lord and Master, to govern you by his Spirit, and by his Laws, as ever you desire and hope to be saved by his Death and Resurrection. And use frequently to think of this solemn Engagement, after you have made it, that it may have due Force upon you, when you are tempted to revolt to any wicked Practice. Often repeat the same betwixt God and your own Soul;

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and especially renew it by frequent Attendance on the Holy Communion, there seeking for Grace and Strength from God, to walk in his Holy Ways steadfastly and constantly.

II. But that brings me to a second Direction, that you should not resolve upon all this in a Confidence of your own Strength, but in a most humble Dependence on the Grace of God, which he is ever willing to bestow on such as seek it earnestly in the way he has appointed, by a due Attendance on the Means of Grace, the Word, Prayer and Sacraments. Wherefore as you have Opportunity, attend carefully to the reading and hearing of his Word, *and bide it in your Heart, that you may not sin against him.* And be very much in Prayer to God for his Holy Spirit, to be given you through his Son Jesus, who will powerfully intercede for you, and make good his Promises to humble and devout Supplicants.

## A P R A Y E R.

he hath taught us in his Gospel,  
saying,

**O** U R Father which art in Hea-  
ven, hallowed be thy Name,  
thy Kingdom come, thy Will be done  
on Earth as it is in Heaven; give  
us this Day our daily Bread; for-  
give us our Trespases, as we forgive  
them that trespass against us; and  
lead us not into Temptation; but  
deliver us from Evil: For thine is  
the Kingdom, and the Power, and  
the Glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

The Grace of the Lord Jesus  
Christ, the Love of God, and  
the Fellowship of the Holy Ghost,  
be with me now and evermore,  
*Amen.*

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